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Aspects of the International Class Struggle in Africa, the Caribbean and America

Political conferences of the oppressed invariably attract a variety of responses - varying from cynical conviction that they are an utter waste of time to naïve optimism that they will change the face of the world. In actuality, popular struggle continues from day to day at many different and more profound levels; and its intensity at any given time primarily determines the relevance and utility of the conference as a technique of co-ordination. The Sixth Pan-African Congress scheduled for Dar es Salaam in June, 1974 consciously aims at being heir to a tradition of conferences which grew out of the response of Africans to their oppression in the first half of this century. Therefore, its rationale must be sought though a careful determination of the co-ordinates of the contemporary endeavours of the African people everywhere.

Since the Fifth Pan-African Congress held in Manchester in 1945, the political geography of Africa has been transformed by the rise of some forty constitutionally independent political units presided over by Africans. This is to state the obvious. Yet, following in the wake of the great pageant of the regaining of political independence, there has come the recognition on the part of many that the struggle of the African people has intensified rather than abated, and that it is being expressed not merely as a contradiction between African producers and European capitalists but also as a conflict between the majority of the black masses and a small African possessing class. This, admittedly, is to state the contentious; but the Sixth Pan-African Congress will surely have to walk the tightrope of this point of contention.

Any 'Pan' concept is an exercise in self-definition by a people, aimed at establishing a broader redefinition of themselves than that which had so far been permitted by those in power. Invariably, however, the exercise is undertaken by a specific social group or class which speaks on behalf of the population as a whole. This is always the case with respect to national movements. Consequently, certain questions must be placed on the agenda: notably, the following:

- Which class leads the national movement?
- How capable is this class of carrying out the historical tasks of national liberation?
- Which are the silent classes on whose behalf 'national' claims are being articulated?

The significance of the above questions emerges clearly in the classic case of Pan-Slavic nationalism. The Pan-Slavic ideology of the late nineteenth century and the turn of this century offered the Slav peoples of Eastern Europe a unified vision of themselves, aiming to transcend the fragmentation which was a consequence of the powerful waves of imperial expansion which has [had] struck the shores of the Adriatic and the Black Sea. The Slav intelligentsia who advocated Pan-Slavism were spokesmen of emergent bourgeois forces in the clash against feudalism, and their position also reflected some sympathy for the oppressed peasantry since it was in the interests of capitalism that serfdom be removed. But their hopes were frustrated because they failed to unseat indigenous and external feudal oppressors, including their Slav 'Brothers' who formed the ruling class in Tsarist Russia. Subsequently, the local Balkan bourgeoisie were unable or unwilling to confront capitalist/imperialist partition; and the region gave rise to the term 'Balkanization', as the supreme expression of failure to carry out the task of national liberation and unification. It was left to the Balkan masses under working class leadership albeit under conditions of war to tackle effectively the problem of nationalism and of broader eastern European unity in the period after the second world war. Significantly enough, they did so within the context of socialist reconstruction, a task which was beyond groups benefiting from capitalist exploitation.

Pan-Africanism in the post-independence era is internationalist in so far as it seeks the unity of peoples living in a large number of juridically independent states. But it is simultaneously a brand of nationalism; and one must therefore penetrate its nationalist form to appreciate its class content. This exercise is made easier by the fact the nationalist movements in Africa which led to the regaining of independence in more than three dozen states constitute a phenomenon which has already received considerable attention. These movements were essentially political fronts

or class alliance in which the grievances of all social groups were expressed as 'national' grievances against the colonizers. However, while the workers and peasants formed the over-whelming numerical majority, the leadership was almost exclusively petty bourgeois. Understandably, this leadership placed to the fore those 'national' aims which contributed most directly to the promotion of their own class interests; but they voiced sentiments which were historically progressive, partly because of their own confrontation with the colonialists and partly because of pressure from the masses. Pan-Africanism was one of these progressive sentiments, which served as a platform for that sector of the African or black petty bourgeois leadership which was most uncompromising in its struggle against colonialism at any given time during the colonial period.

Virtually all leaders of African independence movements paid at least lip service to the idea that regional freedom was only a step towards the freedom and unity of the whole continent; and the most advanced nationalists were usually the most explicit on the issue of Pan-African solidarity. Nkrumah and Kenyatta were both at Manchester; while Nyerere, Kaunda and Mboya were the driving forces behind the Pan-African Movement for East and Central Africa (PAMECA). Within the Francophone sphere, several leaders took Pan-Africanist positions in one form or another. The radical Union des Populations de Cameroun refused to accept colonial boundaries in Africa; Senghor espoused a culturally oriented doctrine of black internationalism, comparable to Pan-Africanism; and even Houphouet-Boigny was initially associated with a political party which was Pan-Africanist in thrust: namely, the Rassemblement Democratique Africain, which addressed itself to the whole of French West Africa. Pan-African solidarity also manifested itself with regard to the war of independence in Algeria, an episode of which united not merely North Africa but also helped force alliances between progressive nationalists on both sides of the Sahara. Similarly, the rise of national liberation movements dedicated to achieving freedom by any means necessary served to underscore the reality of Pan-Africanism. All African leaders had to concede that freedom in Southern Africa was vital to guarantee the freedom of any given part of Africa, and the test of practice showed that commitment was greatest in the case of the most forward-looking of the petty bourgeois regimes - Ghana (under Nkrumah), Egypt (under Nasser), Tanzania, Zambia and Guinea.

It would be unhistorical to deny the progressive character of the African petty bourgeoisie at a particular moment in time. Owing to the low level of development of the productive forces in colonized Africa, it fell to the lot of the small privileged educated group to give expression to a mass of grievances against racial discrimination, low wages, low prices for cash crops, colonial bureaucratic commandism, and the indignity of alien rule as such. But the petty bourgeoisie were reformers and not revolutionaries. Their class limitations were stamped upon the

character of the independence which they negotiated with the colonial masters.^[1] In the very process of demanding constitutional independence, they reneged on the cardinal principle of Pan-Africanism: namely, the unity and indivisibility of the African continent.

The first Pan-Africanists to engage in the political mobilization of the African masses on African soil had a continental outlook. The African National Congress which was formed in the Union of South Africa in 1912, aimed at being 'African' and not merely 'South African' and it was renamed in 1923 to emphasize this fact. Significantly, organizations of the same name extended into what is now Zimbabwe, Malawi, Zambia and Tanzania. It is also significant that dynamic African spokesmen of the 1930s like Nnamdi Azikiwe and Wallace Johnson were African rather than Nigerian or Sierra Leonean. But the lawyers and place-seekers who eventually took the independence movement in hand were incapable of transcending the territorial boundaries of the colonial administrations. Imperialism defined the context in which constitutional power was to be handed over, so as to guard against the transfer of economic power or genuine political power. The African petty bourgeoisie accepted this, with only a small amount of dissent and disquiet being manifested by the progressive elements such as Nkrumah, Nyerere and Sekou Toure.^[2] Areas of West and Central Africa which experienced French colonial rule witnessed the shameless dismantling of those colonial politics which had a large territorial base. Whereas the French had maintained unity for exploitation, the African petty bourgeoisie lacked the capacity to demand both unity and freedom. So they accepted the Balkanization which led to fragments called Ivory Coast, Upper Volta, Niger, Chad, Central African Republic and so on. Since independence, little or no progress has been registered with respect to reversing this Balkanization.

It is a striking historical fact that the bourgeoisie proper have been the spearheads of national unity in which capitalism was first engendered. They sought political unity to guarantee the integration of production and distribution, giving rise to what were then relatively large nation states in Britain, France and Germany as compared to the numerous feudal fiefs which previously existed. The North American continent provides the most formidable example of the identification of bourgeois interests with federal unity and with the building of an infrastructure which rolled across a whole continent without regard to the cost in blood especially since the blood spilt was principally African and Native American (Indian). The petty bourgeoisie of Asia, Africa and Latin America are a different breed. They cannot be described as 'entrepreneurs', 'pioneers', 'captains of industry', 'robber barons' or in any of the other swashbuckling terms coined to glorify the primary accumulation of capital. Franz Fanon flays them unmercifully but truthfully when he points to the shoddy, imitative, lack-lustre character of the African petty bourgeoisie. Their role in the international capitalist system has always been that of

compradors. Their capital outlay might often be greater than that of a factory owner during the industrial revolution in England during the early nineteenth century, but in the present era of monopoly capitalism it suffices mainly for chicken-farms. In any event, most of the African petty bourgeoisie is not directly involved in economic enterprises - their real sphere being the professions, the administration and the military/police hierarchy. They lack both the vision and the objective base to essay the leap towards continental unity.

A close scrutiny further reveals that the failure of the African ruling class to effect meaningful unity is not merely due to weakness. Recalling once more the dismantling process which took place in Francophone Africa at the time of negotiated independence, it can be seen that the pusillanimity of the African petty bourgeoisie in the face of the deliberate creation of non-viable dependent mini-states by France attests not merely to the strength of the colonizers but also to fear on the part of the presumptive African rulers that larger territorial units might have negated their narrow class welfare. Throughout the continent, none of the successful independence movements denied the basic validity of the boundaries created a few decades ago by imperialism. To have done so would have been to issue a challenge so profound as to rule out the preservation of the petty bourgeois interests in a compromise 'independence' worked out in conjunction with international capital.

If the weakness of the present petty bourgeois leadership of Africa were the only problem, then they could be dismissed as passive bystanders, who cannot make operational the potential of Pan-Africanism as an ideology of liberation. However, they maintain themselves as a class by fomenting internal divisions and by dependence on external capitalist powers. These policies are antithetical to Pan-Africanism. The record since independence confirms that the interests of the African petty bourgeoisie are as irreconcilable with genuine Pan-Africanism as Pan-Africanism is irreconcilable with the interests of international capitalism.

Most African mini-states are engaged in consolidating their territorial frontiers, in preserving the social relations prevailing inside these frontiers, and in protecting imperialism in the form of the monopolies and their respective states. The capitalist super-powers, directly and indirectly, individually and collectively, guarantee the existence of the African petty bourgeoisie as a ruling class and use them to penetrate and manipulate African society. This has been done so crudely and openly that one does not have to be especially informed or especially aware in order to perceive what has been going down. Ex-ambassadors of the U.S. have a way of reminiscing on how they cynically manoeuvred the Reds and Blacks; local representatives of American, British and French security forces are so entrenched that they dispense with all cover; and the African petty bourgeoisie itself is so

gauche that it rushes openly to the defence of an international monopoly such as LONRHO, when even the metropolitan political rulers are too embarrassed to do so.[\[3\]](#)

All the activities of international capital aim at perpetuating the division of the continent which they initiated at the time of the Partition. The petty bourgeoisie is also showing that it seeks to maintain division of the African masses, since the anti-colonial alliance with all other classes has gained its objective of formal independence. The only alliance which the African ruling class now vigorously defends is that with imperialism against the African people. Most decidedly, this power structure does not want to allow the masses either the consciousness or the reality of unity.

Pan-Africanism has been so flouted by the present African regimes that the concept of 'Africa' is dead for all practical purposes such as travel and employment. The 'Africanisation' that was aimed against the European colonial administrator soon gave way to restrictive employment and immigration practices by Ivory Coast, Ghana (under Busia), Zaire, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and others - aimed against Dahomeans, Nigerians, Burundi nationals, Malawians, Kenyans and all Africans who were guilty of believing that Africa was for the Africans. Of course, it was said that unemployment among citizens of any given country forced the government to take extreme steps. This is a pitiable excuse, which tries to hide the fact that unemployment is the responsibility of the neo-colonial regimes, which can do nothing better than preside over dependent economies with little growth and no development.[\[4\]](#) In many respects, one African has been further shut off from another during the present neo-colonial phase than was the case during raw colonialism. Even within the context of the existing African nation states, the African ruling class has seldom sought to build anything other than tribal power bases, which means that they seek division and not unity at all levels of political activity, be it national, continental, or international.

The dominant mode of thinking in Africa today is inherited from the colonial masters and is given currency by the state apparatus. Not surprisingly, therefore, the very concept of class is ignored or mystified. The petty bourgeoisie get very upset at being called "petty bourgeois", and strenuously deny that there are any class differences between themselves on the one hand and the workers and peasants on the other. It is not surprising that Socialism has been enemy number one for so many African states. African leaders fight the bogey of Communist threat rather than the reality of capitalist/imperialist oppression. Even the more progressive of this ruling class harbour and protect local reactionaries while neutralizing or eliminating Marxist and other left-wing elements. In ten, twelve or fifteen years of constitutional independence, the various parts of Africa have scored

no victories in ending exploitation and inequality. On the contrary, social differences have increased rapidly and the same applies to the amount of surplus extracted by foreign monopoly capital. In the spheres of production and technology, the so-called "development decade" of the sixties offers the spectacle of decreasing agricultural production, a declining share of world trade, and the proliferation of dependency structures because of the further penetration of multinational corporations. All of these matters are highly relevant to a discussion of Pan-Africanism.

The transformation of the African environment, the transformation of social and productive relations, the break with imperialism, and the forging of African political and economic unity are all dialectically interrelated. This complex of historical tasks can be carried out only under the banner of Socialism and through the leadership of the working classes. The African petty bourgeoisie as a ruling class use their state power against Socialist ideology, against the material interests of the working class, and against the political unity of the African masses.

Of course, the rhetoric of the African ruling class is something else. Only a Banda has the temerity to openly abuse the concept of African unity, and only a few others would openly espouse capitalism and imperialism as decent, and just. Otherwise, the petty bourgeoisie prefers the technique of paying lip-service to progressive ideas, seeking the defeat of these ideas through a process of trivialization and vulgarization. Both Socialism and Pan-Africanism are of the utmost importance with respect to this technique. In one sense, the unwillingness of the petty bourgeoisie to manifest overt hostility to Socialism and Pan-Africanism is a testimony to the development of mass consciousness and to the level of confrontation between progressive and reactionary forces on the world stage. But it is also very insidious in so far as pseudo-revolutionary positions tend to pre-empt genuinely revolutionary positions. For instance, the existing African regimes have helped create the illusion that the OAU represents the concretization of Pan-African unity. The OAU is the principal instrument which legitimizes the forty-odd mini-states visited upon us by colonialism.

It is a tribute to the momentum of Pan-Africanism that the OAU had to be formed. The idea of Pan-African political unity had taken deep roots, and it had to be given expression if only in the form of a consultative international assembly. This indicates a higher level of continental political co-ordination than was to be found in Latin America during the period when the old colonial regimes there were being demolished. It is also true that no imperialist power is a voting member of the organization, in the way that the United States of America is entrenched within the Organization of American States. Nevertheless, the O.A.U. does far more to frustrate than to realize the concept of African Unity. The degree of its penetration

by imperialist powers has been evidenced on numerous occasions, the most striking being those which have arisen around the Unilateral Declaration of Independence by the white minority in Zimbabwe, around the issue of 'Dialogue' with the white racist South African regime, and over the persistence of the French in selling arms to the Republic of South Africa.

At best, the OAU regulates a few internal conflicts between the petty bourgeoisie from different parts of the continent. Beyond this, it is committed to maintain the separation of African peoples implicit in the present territorial boundaries, so as to buttress the exploitative social systems which prevail on the continent in this neo-colonial epoch.

When Lumumba was waging his heroic battle against imperialism in the Congo, it seemed for a brief while that there would be an alignment of progressive versus reactionary African forces. The masses of Africa were only too anxious to join their Congolese brothers in the fight against white and black mercenaries. Indeed, the lines were drawn so clearly that international revolutionary solidarity was forthcoming from many parts of the world. However, the continent suffered a setback in the Congo. Affairs in the Congo were 'normalized' to the point of changing the country's name to Zaire. Meanwhile, one of the most important principles accepted by African governments in the wake of the defeat of the Congolese was that no popular dissident movement in an independent African country can be supported by any group or government in another independent African country. In constitutional terms, this is expressed in the fine-sounding phrase "non-interference in the internal affairs of a member state". In practical terms, this is how the most reactionary elements of the petty bourgeoisie tie the hands of the masses of Africa.

One of the cardinal principles of Pan-Africanism is that the people of one part of Africa are responsible for the freedom of their brothers in other parts of African; and, indeed, black people everywhere were to accept the same responsibility. The OAU denies this, apart from areas still under formal colonial rule. By so doing, they are implying that the objective conditions which impelled the Africans masses to fight the colonialists have since been transformed, which is a blatant falsehood. Any exploitative, oppressive and autocratic African state is cordoned off against fellow African intervention or criticism, even when the most elementary civil and human rights are trampled upon. Meanwhile, the more progressive states are not really protected against intrigues and various forms of aggression arranged by imperialism through the agency of the adjacent neo-colonial African states; and, in any event, Socialism cannot be built in any one African country, so that the few initiatives towards Socialist transformation on the continent are bound to be stifled by the continued division of Africa into artificial states.

The question posed at the outset of this analysis in relation to the class content of nationalism suggested that one identifies the leading class, assesses its revolutionary capacity and evaluates the manner in which the subordinate classes are handled. Our conclusions at this point are that the African petty bourgeois leadership since independence has been an obstacle to the further development of the African revolution. A final illustration to this effect is the way in which the very vanguard of the Pan-Africanist movement (as it emerged from the Fifth Congress) lost its direction and wallowed in bourgeois theory and practice. Like other African leaders, they too propagated the false antithesis between Pan-Africanism and Communism - an intellectual activity spearheaded by no less a person than George Padmore. Understandably, his practical politics suffered a corresponding decline; and in spite of once having stood in the ranks of the international working class movement, Padmore found himself intervening in Guyana in the mid-1950s on the side of that section of the local leadership which was supported by the British and American governments, by local and foreign capitalists and by the CIA-infiltrated trade union, the AFL-CIO.^[5] At the same time, Nkrumah was engaging in ideological mystification under new facades such as 'consciencism', while doing little to break the control of the international bourgeoisie or the Ghanaian petty bourgeoisie over the state. He had already eliminated the genuine working class leadership from the CPP during the first years of power, and it was only after his overthrow by a reactionary petty bourgeois coup d'etat that Nkrumah became convinced that there was a class struggle in Africa and that the national and Pan-African movements required leadership loyal to its mass base of workers and peasants.^[6]

Obfuscation of the notion of class in post-independence Africa has made Pan-Africanism a toothless slogan as far as imperialism is concerned, and it has actually been adopted by African chauvinists and reactionaries, marking a distinct departure from the earlier years of this century when the proponents of Pan-Africanism stood on the left flank of their respective national movements on both sides of the Atlantic. The recapture of the revolutionary initiative should clearly be one of the foremost tasks of the Sixth Pan-African Congress.

Although New World black representation predominated at all Pan-African Congresses and Conferences in the past, the agendas were usually devoted almost exclusively to the affairs of the African continent. It can be assumed that the Sixth Pan-African Congress will not be substantially different, but the creation of independent Caribbean nation states does introduce a new dimension with regard to the participation of this part of the black world. Having sketched the main outlines of the petty bourgeois position in Africa, it is unnecessary to elaborate on the Caribbean scene, because of the numerous and basic similarities. It is to be noted, however, that that which appears as a tragedy against the vast backcloth of

Africa re-appears as comedy in the Caribbean. Early this year, the people of the then colony of Grenada took to the streets to express in uncompromising terms their opposition to the exploitative and oppressive system of Anglo-American colonialism, which is manned locally by a certain petty bourgeois clique. At the same time, the British government carried on regardless in its plans to grant independence to the said petty bourgeois clique, expressing reservations only on the point of whether or not it was safe to send a member of the Royal Family to preside over the independence ceremony. As it was, militant striking workers deprived the independence celebrations of telephone services, port services and electricity, but the petty bourgeoisie regime managed to add some fireworks to mark the auspicious occasion. What term other than 'comedy' can describe such a situation?

The ruling class in each given British Caribbean territory usually takes pains to create a 'national' identity, which amounts to little more than glorifying the fact that some Africans were sent to slave plantations in Jamaica or Trinidad rather than Barbados or Antigua, as the case may be. On the basis of this 'nationalism', the petty bourgeoisie can continue the former British colonial policy of preventing trade unionists and progressives from moving freely amongst the people of the Caribbean. Another antic which is common on the part of the West Indian regimes is that they operate against (unarmed) national liberation movements inside the Caribbean while fully proclaiming support of African liberation movements in Southern Africa. This latter posture, along with other pro-African rhetoric, was forced on several West Indian leaders because of popular sympathy for the African cause at the mass level. The posturing and rhetoric are extremely useful on jaunts to Africa in their quest for class alliances with the African petty bourgeoisie itself.

Yet, the realities of state power have predetermined that when the Sixth Pan-African Congress meets in Dar-es-Salaam in June 1974 it will be attended mainly by spokesmen of African and Caribbean states which in so many ways represent the negation of Pan-Africanism. One immediate consequence of the rise of constitutionally independent African and West Indian states is that for the first time such a gathering will be held on African soil and will be sponsored, directed and attended mainly by black governments rather than by black intellectuals as such or by small black protest organizations, as was the case up to the Fifth Congress in Manchester. Already it is clear that states will be represented as states and that the OAU will play some role.

When a few individuals began to contemplate this Congress some years ago, it was felt that it should be a coming together of black political movements, as distinct from governments. One school of thought envisaged that it would be a select conference of the most progressive elements in the black world. To a large extent,

this was the significance of the All African People's Conference held in Accra in 1958. However, plans for a similar meeting in the 1970s would be hopelessly idealist. The African radicals of 1958 are by and large the incumbents in office today. The radicals of today lead at best an uncomfortable existence within African states, while some languish in prison or in exile. The present petty bourgeois regimes would look with disfavour at any organized programme which purported to be Pan-African without their sanction and participation.

None of the progressive African regimes, which are already isolated and exposed to internal and external reaction, would dare to host a Congress which brought together only those who aggressively urge a unity of the African working masses and the building of a Socialist society. Such a Congress would have to be held in a metropolitan centre, and would thus condemn itself to serve primarily as a forum for alienated intellectuals.

In the light of the above considerations, any African committed to freedom, Socialism and development would need to look long and hard at the political implications of participation in the Sixth Pan-African Congress. The purists might be tempted to eschew any association whatsoever; but revolutionary praxis demands that one should contend against class enemies in theory and in practice, by seizing every opportunity to utilize all of the contradictions within imperialism as a global system - in this instance, contradictions born of economic exploitation and racist oppression.

Without falling into the trap of imagining that the present states of Africa and the Caribbean will liberate the African masses from the tyranny of man and nature, it still remains an open political question as to how far they can be pressured to take steps which lessen the immediate impact of imperialist exploitation and which perhaps grant respite to the producers and progressive forces. Southern Africa provides excellent illustrations to this effect. Our brothers in the South are striking blows which include attacks on enemy bases in Angola, the destruction of rail links in Mozambique, the disruption of production through strikes in Namibia and South Africa, and the intensification of politico-military offensives in Zimbabwe. The leadership even in the most reactionary African states have found it difficult to avoid responding in some positive manner to these activities; just as liberal organizations and governments of the capitalist world are now finding it prudent to join Socialists and radicals in giving international support to African liberation movements. It would be naïve to abstain from participation in forums where the above processes are taking place, because a committed presence is essential both to accelerate as well as to control contributions which could otherwise cease to be merely opportunist and become actively counter-revolutionary.

Turning to the economic policy of African regimes, one also perceives that the dilemma of increasing underdevelopment places the petty bourgeoisie on the defensive. Whether within the OAU or in a wider Non-Aligned context, they can be propelled to consider new marketing arrangements, new forms of African and Third World cooperation and some devices to moderately restrain foreign exploitation. The agreement between oil producers has been the most striking in recent times. African governments have been understandably ambivalent in their attitude towards the manoeuvres of North African oil states and other producers in the middle East, but the fact that so many members of the OAU broke diplomatic relations with Israel was no insignificant achievement in the face of Zionist imperialist propaganda and penetration in Africa. Clearly, the system of neo-colonialism is not closed to elementary progressive steps by the present leadership. Strictly speaking, such steps derive from the perceived class interests of the petty bourgeoisie. For this reason, it is crucial that within a Pan-African forum a principled and analytical position should be advanced for the adoption of increasingly revolutionary strategies for African economic and political liberation. The petty bourgeoisie must either be pushed forward or further exposed.

As stated at the outset, popular struggle is carried on in many ways and at many different levels. The struggle to participate is the opening round of the series of inter-connected battles likely to emerge out of the proposed Sixth Pan-African Congress.

Queries have been raised with the Temporary Secretariat of the Congress concerning fears that anti-government organizations in the Caribbean would be excluded from participation, owing to the involvement of at least two (English-speaking) Caribbean governments in financing and in offering venues for preparatory meetings. In an open letter to the Secretary of the Temporary Secretariat, Owusu Saudaki drew attention to the following points:

- 1) The involvement of Heads of State, who use their relationship to the Sixth Pan-African Congress as a sign of being progressive while in fact they pursue domestic and foreign policies which maintain the neo-colonial *status quo* within their own countries.
- 2) The possibility that because of financial problems and other problems the only people representing Caribbean countries will be official government delegations and not those people who represent community, workers and other progressive groups in those areas.

It is useful to quote at some length from the reply by the Secretary, Courtland Cox. He notes that, "the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU), which is host for the Sixth Pan-African Congress, strongly recommended that all African and Caribbean

heads of state, without exception, be invited to the Congress This formal procedure should not be construed as a blanket endorsement by the Congress of domestic and foreign policies of all heads of state, nor should it be taken that the Congress will be dominated by the policies of any one, or groups of these heads of state The truth is that those who advocate the most militant steps for African liberation ... frequently don't even have money to get together to talk President Nyerere used the occasion of an interview with the Congress earlier this year to ask how can the colonially-created existing black states be used by our people to gain liberation? These states are there. Their policies, institutions and services have some considerable impact on the lives of millions of Africans Our criteria for delegations to the Sixth Pan-African Congress may be stated generally as: (1) Africans with demonstrated commitment to progressive political principles, (2) Africans with capabilities (or access to these) necessary to meet our people's basic needs, especially those with technical skills, and (3) Africans with mass political bases; as embodied in political organizations and institutions with recognized community constituencies No delegates, whether from the Caribbean or anywhere else, will be prevented from participating in the Congress due to lack of funds. This is one of the special charges of the International Secretariat and the International Steering Committee".[\[7\]](#)

In spite of the above re-assurances, it will undoubtedly require vigilance, mobilization and perhaps confrontation within the Caribbean on the part of Left movements to confirm their right to attend - albeit alongside of representatives of governments and pro-government organizations. The apparent restriction of delegations to the English-speaking Caribbean is another negative feature. The seemingly superficial difference of language has always sharply divided the international black movement into an Anglophone sector and a Latin culture zone. French-speaking (and Spanish-speaking) blacks joined their brothers in French-ruled Africa in elaborating the initially anti-colonialist and anti-racist doctrine of Negritude. But, like Pan-Africanism, Negritude in the hands of petty bourgeois black states became a sterile formulation of black chauvinism, incapable of challenging capitalism and imperialism. Negritude in Senegal buttresses neo-colonialism, while in Haiti it is used to gloss over an even more desperate situation of exploitation and suppression of the black masses.

It is important to break through the language barrier and it is crucial to recognize the existence of opposed tendencies within the international black world. The Congress organizers must be asked to take steps to reach the known nationalist and Socialist opponents of French colonial rule in places like Martinique and French Guiana; and they cannot be allowed to side-step the existence of a large black population in Cuba who have already accumulated rich experience in the liquidation of racism through Socialist transformation. But of course these are not tasks to be

left solely to the Secretariat and the host country of Tanzania. Any Pan-Africanists committed to Socialist revolution will first strive to ensure that the Congress and the future of Pan-Africanism are not left to the tender mercies of the black petty bourgeoisie.

It is still not clear which governments will or will not participate in the proposed Sixth Pan-African Congress. No release from the Temporary Secretariat has borne on this point, although information did become public via the Tanzanian press suggesting that the invitations were all-embracing and that a proposal to exclude Banda was defeated. The more conservative African governments may well view the whole idea with scepticism if not hostility. For them the OAU is quite enough for the realization of Pan-Africanism.

Eloquent testimony to the doubts on the part of segments of the petty bourgeoisie was provided by an editorial comment in Kenya's *Sunday Nation* of March 17, 1974. It suggested that many people would query the very calling of another Pan-African Congress on the grounds that "most of the aims of the Pan-African movement were achieved after the 1945 Manchester meeting". Besides, the proposed Sixth Pan-African Congress has certain areas of focus such as health, agriculture, technological research, liberation support and political cooperation; and according to the commentary in question, it might be better to leave the governments and the OAU to organize such programmes. Even granting the need for another Congress, the *Sunday Nation* (representative of local and foreign capitalist interests in Kenya) finds that "the whole political tenor of the (proposed) congress is leftist, and the choice of Dar-es-Salaam as the venue for the meeting is no accident". The commentary is in no doubt that the most critical question is that of whom to invite; and it reacts strongly and specifically to the mere whisper that Cuba might be invited, asking rhetorically, "how can the government of Cuba be invited as a participating government?" One must certainly thank this right-wing African journal for corroborating an analysis made from a different perspective. The one point on which class enemies can agree is that there is a battle to be fought.

Given the balance of class forces in the African continent today at the level of state power, it must be assumed that, apart from the Liberation movements, the majority of African delegates will seek to retain Pan-Africanism within its present parameters of inter-state co-operation, based on the persistence of the territorial units and of petty bourgeoisie control. However, a progressive presence of one dimension or another would at least ensure that certain issues would be open to debate. The issues most likely to evoke contention can particularly be foreseen by scrutinizing the official document referred to as "the Call", both in terms of what it says and (perhaps more indicative) what it does not say.[\[8\]](#)

The Call accords high priority to the question of liberation in the still colonized parts of Africa. This is as it should be, not merely because one wants the South to be 'independent' like the rest of Africa, but more so because the nature of the confrontation in South Africa offers the real possibility of African freedom there being qualitatively different from that which was obtained by the constitutional road. Since southern Africa is the cockpit of international monopoly capital, and since Portugal and the white minority regimes are all clearly supported by NATO and multinational corporations, the struggle for national liberation is a rather clearer learning experience than the nationalist episode of the 1950s. People are fighting and dying for more than the trappings of independence. In each theatre of operations, both the leadership and the mass are maturing, so that members of the petty bourgeois stratum which exists there as everywhere else have either failed to last the tough course or they have been transformed in the process. There will be no doubt be more instances of opportunism and defections, and there will no doubt be a much longer period of the practice of tribalist mobilization in certain quarters; but the prospects of greater ideological clarity, or increasing politicization and of a stronger attachment to equalitarian and democratic structures arise directly out of the concrete situation, being pre-conditions for the success of the armed struggle.

At the very least, the Congress would be expected to record the firmest statement of support for the Liberation movements, taking as a point of departure the accord reached recently by the OAU at Accra which has been the most resolute statement by African leaders to date. Documentary support for the Liberation Movements is by no means a decisive factor in their existence or success, but when a conference has to pronounce on this matter, then those statements must be sharp enough to constitute political and diplomatic weapons for the use in the rear of those fighting on the front lines. Because the *Lusaka Manifesto* (1970) was a mild document which could be interpreted as having some reservations about armed struggle, it was seized upon in this sense by many reactionaries, and it was still being quoted as an official position of progressive African leaders long after they had unequivocally declared their backing for the armed struggle of the *Mogadishu Declaration* (1971).

However, generally speaking, no delegate at any conference today has to make the case for the Liberation Movements. For one thing, they are already making the most effective case for themselves through sacrifice and achievements; and for another thing, the real danger in the support of the movement on the African continent itself is that rhetoric may take the place of practical assistance. The record to date exposes the gap between resolution and practice on the part of OAU members as far as monetary support to the OAU Liberation Committee is concerned. Recently, the rhetoric has become seemingly more fiery and reveals a tendency to obfuscate issues concerning the interpretation of the struggle. Take, for instance, the demagogic appeal that African governments should send armies to the

combat zone. Such a suggestion is completely out of touch with the concept of people's war and out of sympathy with the process through which a people prepare themselves for self-liberation. One African Generalissimo has just called for the scrapping of people's guerrilla activities in Southern Africa, and proposes instead to lead his own (mercenary) army to conquer the white regimes!

Even the slightly more palatable call for individual volunteers casts doubts on the capacity of Africans in the South to effect their own liberation. Significantly enough, these statements do not originate with any of the Liberation Movements. None of the Liberation Movements has called for anything other than material, diplomatic and moral support. They have the fighters - that is not a problem. A serious problem does arise when offers of assistance to the struggle are used to camouflage attempts to penetrate and control on the part of imperialism and its lackeys. When "Our Man in Kinshasa" appears in the role of supervisor, umpire and builder of the Angolan people's movement, it hardly requires a great deal of political acumen to sense the pricking of one's thumbs.*

The Congress must be asked to adopt the position that Liberation Movements should at all times be allowed to speak for themselves. The demand should be that, both inside and outside Africa, Liberation Movements should have unshakeable credentials, instead of being excluded when their interests are being discussed or instead of having to fight anew on each occasion to determine whether they should have the status of observers or second-class participants. It is for the movements to indicate their own priorities and necessities at the Congress, and in response other delegates would contemplate the practical support which can be mobilized. It should also be made clear that the most positive support is the advancement of popular anti-imperialist power everywhere on the continent and in the Pan-African world.

Vying with liberation in importance in the estimation of the authors of *The Call* is the question of science and technology. *The Call* asserts rightly that "*If we do not control the means of survival and protection in the context of the twentieth century we will continue to be colonized.*" (Emphasis in the original). Consequently, it proposes the establishment of a Pan-African Centre of Science and Technology geared towards such priorities as the development of a viable self-supporting agricultural system in Africa.

On the issue to technology, one is again faced with the fact that superficially universal agreement can be obtained. No one would deny the necessity for mobilizing maximum resources in science and technology to fight the war against ignorance, disease and poverty. No one can remain indifferent to the chronic malnutrition or to the acute suffering brought on by widespread drought and

famine. The danger is that a discussion of technology tends to become 'technocratic' in the worst sense of the word. Drought and famine, for instance, are not merely 'natural phenomena' arising out of the failure of precipitation from on high. The incapacity to prevent or deal with drought and famine and the fantastic hardship which ensues are all related to the socio-economic structures of neo-colonial Africa and to the way that our economies are located within the international imperialist system. It requires certain *political* decisions to change these structures and the system. Whether or not Africa will make scientific progress, whether or not the technology will be relevant and adequate, whether or not the mass of the people will benefit from scientific/technological innovations are all questions which can be resolved only within specific socio-economic contexts and questions which are therefore ultimately political and ideological.[\[9\]](#)

It is precisely in the politico-ideological sphere that *The Call* is most deficient. It confines itself to the broad distinction between colonized blacks and European colonizers. It says nothing about the existence of capitalist and Socialist systems or of struggle within the capitalist/imperialist world. It comes out against the fact that Africans allow finance capital to dominate and direct their economic and social life; but this leaves room for the national bourgeois interpretation that this domination can be remedied while still remaining within the capitalist fold. Indeed, most African governments are at the moment scrambling to become more deeply involved in the European Common Market. With regard to indigenous exploitation, the authors of *The Call* are prepared to "*stand with those who are avowed and open enemies of the elite who wish to lead a life of privilege among our people*" -- which is fine, but hardly sufficiently analytical and explicit.

In defence of the bland nature of *The Call*, the organizers of the Congress would no doubt argue that it is not their function to pre-empt discussion, but that their role is to bring together a wide spectrum of views held by concerned Africans and black people everywhere. (In line with Cox to Saudaki as cited above.) But the tenor of this discussion so far has been to illustrate that neutrality and unity of nationalism is illusory and that in practice particular classes or strata capture nationalist movements and chart their ideological and political direction. Pan-Africanism today has to recognize such situations, if it is to be a brand of revolutionary nationalism and if it is to be a progressive internationalist force.

Coincidentally, a "Conference of Asians" is scheduled to be held in Tokyo next June at about the same time as the Sixth Pan-African Congress. Their Preparatory Committee has also circulated a preliminary call which suggests that "We have been left behind and they are ahead of us". However, in this instance, 'we' and 'they' are not simplistically Asian and European, respectively. On the contrary, the Asian Preparatory Committee explains as follows: "'We' are the people, the masses of the

people. 'They' are those who have power and money. 'They' create their own network of power and money to exploit and suppress us, the people. 'We' the people, are left behind; 'we' are divided and ruled."[\[10\]](#)

The inference to be drawn from the above Asian analogy is that the goal of African people's unity is by no means inconsistent with a policy a drawing a line of steel against African enemies of the people and with seeking the closest working relations with non-African peoples, to the extent that the latter are engaged in the fight against exploitation. It should not be imagined that previous Congresses were occasions for all-black camaraderie. Oftentimes, the Left and the Right were represented, and a line had to be hammered out through struggle, as was the case when DuBois and Blaise Diagne confronted each other. For that matter, the reactionary trend was occasionally successful; notably, when the French colonialists managed to promote their own spokesman, Blaise Diagne.

Whatever may emerge from the Sixth Pan-African Congress, it is necessary that some participants should be identified with a platform which recognizes the following elements:

- 1) That the principal enemies of the African people are the capitalist class in the U.S.A., Western Europe and Japan.
- 2) That African liberation and unity will be realized only through struggle against the African allies of international capital.
- 3) That African freedom and development requires disengagement from international monopoly capital.
- 4) That exploitation of Africans can be terminated only through the construction of a Socialist society, and technology must be related to this goal.
- 5) That contemporary African state boundaries must be removed to make way for genuine politico-economic unity of the continent.
- 6) That the Liberation Movements of Southern Africa are revolutionary and anti-imperialist and must therefore be defended against petty bourgeois state hegemony.
- 7) That the unity of Africa requires the unity of progressive groups, organizations and institutions rather than merely being the preserve of states.
- 8) That Pan-Africanism must be an internationalist, anti-imperialist and Socialist weapon.

Walter Rodney[\[11\]](#)

Dar-es-Salaam

April 1974

Notes

[1] Strictly speaking, the African petty bourgeoisie during this early stage of the independence struggle constituted a stratum or fraction within the international bourgeoisie. One of the most interesting features of post-independence politics is the manner in which the petty bourgeoisie has increased its dimensions, its economic base and its autonomy by use of the state machinery.

[2] Some of the evidence attesting to this point can be listed as follows: a) Sekou Toure attempted to move immediately into political units broader than Guinea - comprising at various times Senegal, Mali and Ghana. b) Nkrumah secured the insertion of Pan-Africanist clauses in the **Constitution of the Republic of Ghana**, 1960, which was framed "in the confident expectation of an early surrender of sovereignty to a union of African states and territories". c) Nyerere was prepared to postpone the independence of Tanganyika and subordinate this objective to that of an independent East African Federation, "rather than take the risk of perpetuating the balkanization of East Africa" -- See **Freedom and Unity** (1966), p. 90.

[3] The allusions are firstly to William Attwood, **The Reds and the Blacks** (London 1967) and secondly to several international news highlights of 1973/74. Specifically on the Lonrho issue, what is worth noting is that the embarrassment was caused to British Prime Minister, Edward Heath, because of the revelations of the blatant way in which Lonrho directors flouted profit controls at a time when the Conservative government was trying to convince the working class to accept wage freezes.

[4] See, e.g. Samir Amin, **Neo-Colonialism in West Africa** (Penguin, 1973).

[5] For a discussion on this point, see Philip Reno, **The Ordeal of British Guiana** (Monthly Review, 1964).

[6] See Kwame Nkrumah, **Class Struggle in Africa** (Panaf, 1970) and **Revolutionary Path** (Panaf, 1973).

[7] Owusu Saudaki to Courtland Cox, 16. Oct. 1973 and Courtland Cox to Owusu Saudaki, 18 Oct. 1973.

[8] **The Call** was originally issued by the Temporary Secretariat in Washington and is now available from P.O. Box 9351 Dar-es-Salaam.

* **Macbeth**: "By the pricking of my thumbs/Something wicked this way comes"

[9] Black progressives are becoming increasingly aware of the political and ideological dimensions of the question of utilizing technology for human well-being. See, e.g. S.E. Anderson, "Science, Technology and Black Liberation", **The Black Scholar**, March 1974.

[10] Information on the "Congress of Asians" can be obtained from: Dai San Kikaku; 4th floor, Omotemachi Building; 4-8-19, Akasaka; Minato-ku, **Tokyo, Japan**.

[11] The author has been associated with the Congress preparations in the capacity of 'sponsor' - a vaguely-defined term which includes persons of many differing political persuasions.

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